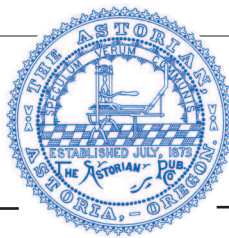


OPINION

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW

Live county broadcasts boost transparency

Today we give a tip of the hat to Clatsop County for an action that fosters openness in government.

It's a core theme for news media, but one we believe should be embraced by everyone.

For the past several months, county staff have been working behind the scenes to televise and broadcast Board of Commissioners meetings live. The idea is that this will create a more engaged citizenry by bringing meetings to the homes of people who cannot attend in person.

Efforts began some while ago. Officials reached a franchise agreement with Charter TV in 2015, following several years of negotiations. As part of this, Charter paid \$39,000 to cover the cost of a public-access channel.

The following year, commissioners approved a \$90,000 contract to upgrade audio and install video capabilities in the Judge Guy Boyington Building in Astoria, where the board meets.

Cameras, a projector with retractable screen, audio improvements and other



Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore gives a report during a county commissioners meeting. The meetings are now televised.

upgrades were added.

The meetings take place at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Delayed recordings have been posted on the county website at www.co.clatsop.or.us and YouTube since last year.

Now they are broadcast live on the Government Access Channel 190 to

Charter/Spectrum cable customers in the county. Recordings are posted the next day on the county website.

We hope many Clatsop County residents will take advantage of this service; it's an excellent step toward more transparency.

With tongue firmly in cheek, we

will note that it's not always going to be scintillating viewing. Government meetings invariably move at a pace that causes many to chafe, in part because our elected and appointed officials must follow myriad rules to ensure the legality of actions taken.

Later the channel may be made accessible for groups to produce public-access programming. But first, staff will monitor for any technical issues.

Clatsop County government plays a significant part in our lives. It is pleasing leaders have worked through several technical delays to introduce this way to make the commissioners' decision-making process more visible.

County on TV

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners meet 6 p.m. the second and fourth Wednesdays. Broadcasts are on the Charter/Spectrum cable Government Access Channel 190. Recordings will be posted the next day on the county website at www.co.clatsop.or.us

LETTERS WELCOME

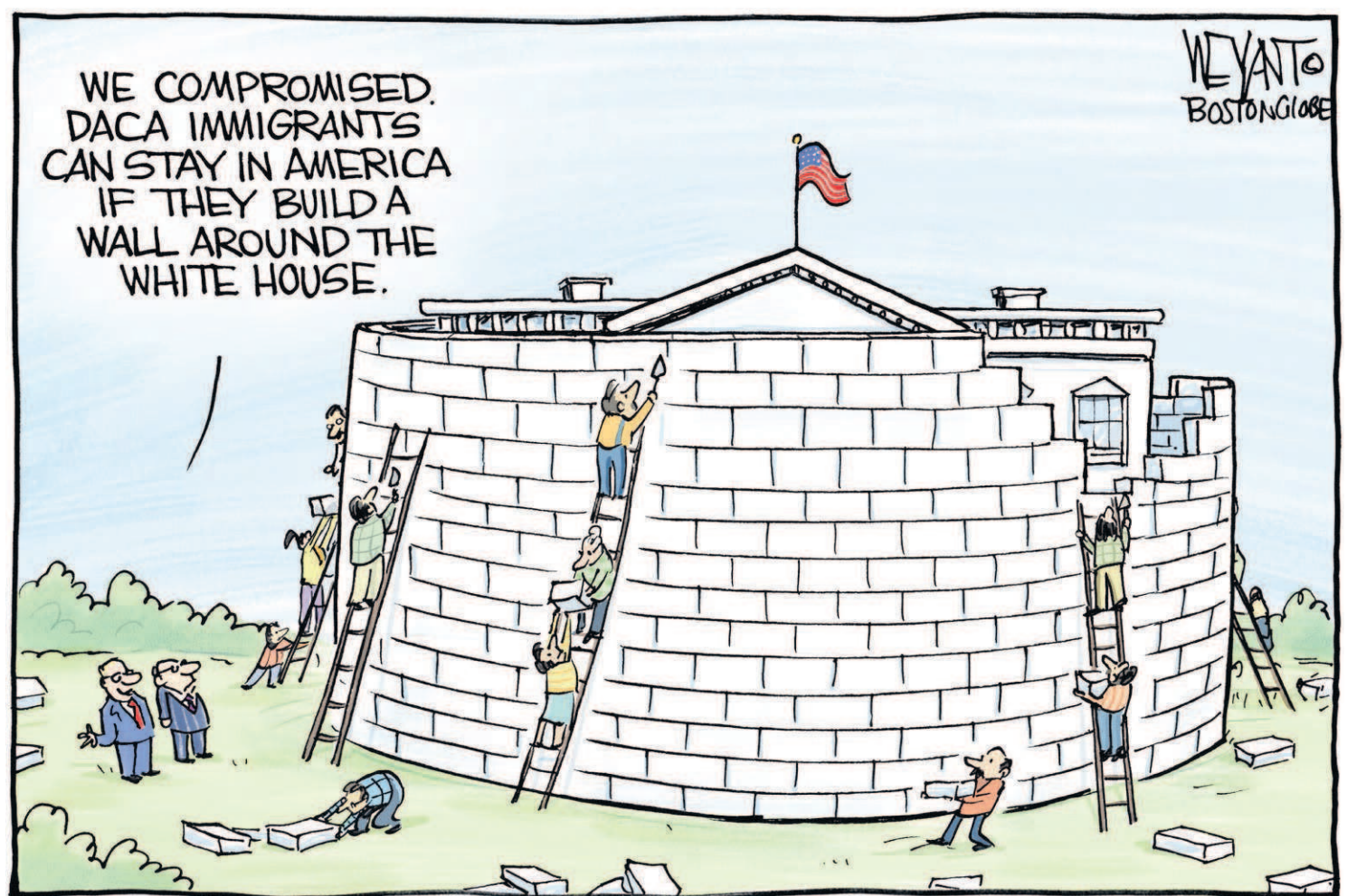
Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at dailyastorian.com/submit letters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or 1555 North Roosevelt in Seaside, or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103.



GUEST COLUMN

Fighting for NOAA is fighting for our communities

I pride myself on the quality and service at our Long Beach, Washington, hotels, but there's no denying the truth: visitors don't come here for the hotels. They come for the beaches, the fishing, the Discovery Trail. They come for the incredible experiences waiting right outside the door.

These natural treasures are the economic bedrock of our tourism-dependent community, and you will hear similar stories at towns all up and down the coast. Our prosperity is built on carefully managed shorelines, and healthy ocean waters that support abundant marine life.

Long Beach, Astoria and other Pacific Northwest towns have long since recognized this is too big a job to tackle alone. We rely on teamwork — with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs — to steward our critical ocean resources.

Here's just one example: the NOAA-funded coastal zone management program, which supports locally-led shoreline management planning. Such plans keep homes and buildings away from erosion-prone or sensitive areas, protecting people and property while maintaining the health of our world-class beaches.

Salmon habitat restoration? The tsunami warning system? Beach protections? They all rely heavily on NOAA funding — funding that the Trump administration and some in Congress are proposing to cut in the upcoming budget negotiations.

That spells trouble, not just for the coast, but for the Northwest's overall economy.



High surf last week carried large debris east of the Long Beach Boardwalk.

Research shows investments in watershed restoration drives significant economic activity. As a business owner, mother of small boys, and lifelong coastal resident, I'm concerned that losing NOAA funding would hurt our economy and put lives at risk.

As a kid growing up in Long Beach, my father and I would listen to the weather forecast to see when it was safe to leave port. Dad, like every other commercial fisherman

in town, relies on NOAA's system for monitoring ocean conditions. The weather on the coast is not just tough — it's dangerous.

Nowadays we use iPhones to get the forecast, but the information still comes from NOAA's tracking system — a system that comforts fishermen's families with the knowledge their loved ones aren't navigating into a dangerous storm. Without it, our fishermen will be operating blind.

But on the coast, you don't even need to set foot on a boat to face weather dangers. With two kids in school and a hotel that opens straight onto the beach, I'm counting on NOAA's tsunami warning system to keep my family and customers safe when disaster strikes.

The White House and House of Representatives have proposed cutting \$900 million and \$700 million, respectively, from NOAA's operating budget. And while the Senate's plan more-or-less maintains funding at current levels, at the moment there is no federal budget at all. Instead, Congress has passed a series of short-term funding extensions, known as continuing resolutions. The third expired last week, triggering a short government shutdown before Congress passed a fourth on Monday, kicking the decision into February.

Continuing resolutions keep the lights on, but they hamstring long-term agency planning. Astorians should be proud of U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, and U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, who have all stood up for our coastal communities. I hope Washington state and Oregon's members of Congress continue the fight for the coastal zone management program, Sea Grant, and the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund and other programs we rely on. I urge them to support the Senate's proposed NOAA funding levels.

The United States is a country with a vast amount of shoreline. At the end of the day, our needs aren't all that different from the needs of communities in New Jersey or Florida: the safety of our citizens, the health of our fisheries and the strength of our economies. NOAA is an integral part of all three.

Tiffany Turner is the co-owner of Adrift Hotels Inc. She lives in Seaview, Washington.



TIFFANY TURNER